

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 TRSE-00

INRE-00 SS-15 SAM-01 SP-02 L-03 NSC-05 EB-07 INR-07

CIAE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 /067 W
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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2599

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1163

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG

SUBJECT: DISPUTE BETWEEN OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM
AND LIBYAN GOVERNMENT

REF: TRIPOLI 1159

1. DEVELOPMENTS TOOK PLACE AS OUTLINED REFTEL
PARA ONE. TWO AMERICAN AND TWO BRITISH OXY
FIELD WORKERS WENT TO AIRPORT OCTOBER 14 TO TAKE
A FLIGHT OUT AND WERE DENIED EXIT. AMERICANS
VISITED EMBASSY THIS MORNING TO DISCUSS PROBLEM
AND ASK EMBASSY ASSISTANCE.

2. THEY SAID THEY WERE VETERAN OIL FIELD
EMPLOYEES, SATISFIED WITH THEIR JOBS AND WORKING
CONDITIONS IN LIBYA, BUT THEY AND THEIR FIELD
COLLEAGUES WANTED TO KNOW THAT THEIR REGULAR
ROTATION IN AND OUT OF LIBYA (SOMETHING LIKE
33 DAYS IN THE FIELD FOLLOWED BY 21 DAYS
WITH THEIR FAMILIES IN U.S. OR ELSEWHERE),
WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY
OXY'S DISPUTE WITH LARG.
THEY SAID THAT THEIR DEPARTURE AND RETURN
DOCUMENTATION WAS IN ORDER AND AS MANY AS 14
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FIELD EMPLOYEES HAVE RETURNED TO LIBYA ON

ROTATION. THEY WERE ASSURED EMBASSY HAS BEEN DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR PROBLEM AND WILL CONTINUE TO ARGUE FOR FREE MOVEMENT OF ALL OUR CITIZENS. FOLLOWING CALL HERE, THEY ASKED ASSISTANCE OF A LIBYAN OFFICIAL WHO HAD PREVIOUSLY SPOKEN TO THE OXY FIELD EMPLOYEES ABOUT THEIR WORKING FOR NATIONAL OIL COMPANY IF OXY WENT OUT OF BUSINESS. THAT CONTACT HAS NOW ARRANGED FOR TWO MEN TO HAVE A MEETING WITH PETROLEUM MINISTRY OFFICIALS.

3. CHARGE THEN ASKED FOR AND HAD MEETING WITH MFA DIRECTOR FOR NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS SHAABAN TO URGE THAT LIBYAN OFFICIALS VIEW THE TRAVEL ISSUE AS MOST SERIOUS AND SEPARATE IT FROM THE OXY-PETROLEUM MINISTRY DISPUTE. IF THE SKILLED FIELD PERSONNEL BECOME ALIENATED, THEY WILL FIND JOBS ELSEWHERE AND LIBYAN OIL INDUSTRY WILL SUFFER. CHARGE READ TO HIM OCTOBER 14 DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING ITEM ON OXY-LARG DISPUTE (STATE 243999) TO STRESS THE WIDE INTEREST IN QUESTION OF TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS. SHAABAN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION AT CAREFUL AND FAIR WAY SPOKESMAN REPLIED TO QUESTIONS. CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT, AS SPOKESMAN SAID, IT WAS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT EFFECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE MADE FOR REGULAR ROTATION OF OIL FIELD WORKERS. SHAABAN SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND SPECIAL NATURE OF TRAVEL PROBLEM AND HOPED TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS IT THIS EVENING WITH MFA UNDERSECRETARY DURDAH, WHO, IN MAJOR AL-HUNI ABSENCE, IS DE FACTO FOREIGN MINISTER.

4. DESPITE LACK OF IMMEDIATE SUCCESS OF TWO AMERICANS IN GETTING AWAY, ONE TRIPOLI-BASED OXY AMERICAN EMPLOYEE DID DEPART YESTERDAY MORNING, AS WELL AS 2 OR 3 BRITISH EMPLOYEES. WE WERE ALSO TOLD BY OXY EXECUTIVE THAT MR. AND MRS. HERBERT (TRIPOLI 1152) ARE EXPECTED TO DEPART IN A DAY OR TWO.
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